

Congregational Constitution Adoption and Revision Process

Congregations are encouraged to maintain a current constitution.

See the current editions of:

- A. *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*
- B. *Guide for Use of the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*
- C. *Constitutions, ByLaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

The above resources are available at: <https://www.elca.org/about/churchwide/office-of-the-secretary/constitutions>

Congregational constitution adoption, bylaw or amendment changes may be proposed by the Congregation Council or voting member (s).

Action	Constitution	By Laws	Amendments	Continuing Resolutions
Adopt New	X	X	X	X
Refer to Model Constitution for Congregations of the ELCA	X	X	X	X
Refer to Guide for Use of the Model Constitution of the ELCA	X	X	X	X
Refer to Constitutions, ByLaws & Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA	X	X	X	X
Proposal Submitted in writing to Congregational Council	At least 60 days before a regular or special congregational meeting called for that purpose	At least 60 days before a regular or special congregational meeting called for that purpose	At least 60 days before a regular or special congregational meeting called for that purpose	N/A
Congregational Council notifies congregation members	By mail of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days prior to congregational meeting	By mail of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days prior to congregational meeting	By mail of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days prior to congregational meeting	By mail of a legally called meeting OR the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions.
Vote for proposed adoption or amended document	At a legally called Congregation Meeting by a <i>majority</i> vote of those present and voting.	At a legally called Congregation Meeting with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present	At a legally called Congregation Meeting by a <i>majority</i> vote of those present and voting.	By a majority vote of a meeting of the congregation OR a two thirds (2/3) vote of all voting

Action	Constitution	By Laws	Amendments	Continuing Resolutions
		and voting.		members of the Congregation Council.
Ratification/2 nd Vote	Without changes at the next annual meeting by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present and voting	No second vote required	Without changes at the next annual meeting by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present and voting	N/A
Effective Date	Included in resolution and noted in the constitution.	Included in resolution and noted in the constitution.	Included in resolution and noted in the constitution.	
Submit to synod office	By secretary of the congregation	By secretary of the congregation	By secretary of the congregation	By secretary of the congregation
Synod constitution review committee member	Will review proposed constitution.	Does not review bylaws	Will review proposed amendment	Does not review continuing resolutions
Notification to Congregation	The synod shall approve or disapprove the proposed changes within 120 days of receipt. They shall notify the congregation of its decision. In the absence of a decision, the changes shall go into effect.	N/A	The synod shall approve or disapprove the proposed changes within 120 days of receipt. They shall notify the congregation of its decision. In the absence of a decision, the changes shall go into effect.	N/A
* Submit copy Please submit a copy of your current constitution with the area (s) of proposed change (s) <i>highlighted</i> or <i>otherwise indicated</i>.	The congregation secretary should submit a copy of approved constitution to the synod office for a file copy.	The congregation secretary should submit a copy of constitution including bylaws to the synod office for a file copy.	The congregation secretary should submit a copy of approved constitution and amendments to the synod office for a file copy.	The congregation secretary should submit a copy of approved constitution, amendments, bylaws, and continuing resolutions to the synod office for a file copy.